

Message Text

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44

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 311310Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6915

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

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LONDON FOR SEITZ

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINR, KE

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY BY-ELECTIONS IN KENYA

1. KENYAN VOTERS WENT TO THE POOLS IN THREE CONSTITUENCIES ON DEC. 29 TO ELECT MP'S TO FILL VACANT SEATS OF FORMER PARLIAMENTARY DISSIDENTS MARK MWITHAGA, JOHN SERONEY AND MARTIN SHIKUKU. MWITHAGA WAS REMOVED FROM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AFTER BEING SENTENCED TO TWO YEARS IMPRISONMENT IN JULY, 1975 (NAIROBI A-100). SERONEY AND SHIKUKU WERE PLACED IN DETENTION OCT. 15 FOR CLAIMING KANDU POLITICAL PARTY WAS "DEAD." (NAIROBI 9106; 900L

2. VOTER TURNOUT WAS EXCEPTIONALLY LOW IN ALL THREE RACES WITH FEWER THAN 20 PER CENT OF REGISTERED VOTERS CASTING BALLOTS. IN MWITHAGA'S FORMER CONSTITUENCY (NAKURU), WILLY KOMEN WHO WAS SHARP-TONGUED CRITIC OF GOVERNMENT AS MP FROM 1969-1974, DEFEATED SEVEN RIVALS INCLUDING FORMER MAU MAU LEADER AND ONE TIME POLITICAL ALLY OF PRESIDENT
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KENYATTA, FRED KABAI. ACCORDING WELL PLACED KANU

PARTY SOURCE, KOMEN HAD BACKING OF MWITHAGA WHO IS SAID TO BE NOW MORE POPULAR THAN EVER IN NAKURU. RICHARD LITUNYA AND G.N. KALYA WERE ELECTED TO SEATS PREVIOUSLY HELD BY SHIKUKU (BUTERE) AND SERONEY (TINDERET) RESPECTIVELY.

3. KANU PARTY OFFICER TOLD EMBOFF DEC. 31 THAT SEVERAL PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES IN BUTERS AND TINDERET WERE REJECTED BY KANU INTERVIEW COMMITTEE. HE DECLINED TO STATE REASONS FOR THEIR REJECTION. THIS INFORMATION SUPPORTS SPECULATION THAT STAND-IN CANDIDATES FOR SERONEY AND SHIKUKU WERE BARRED FROM CONTESTING SEATS.

4. COMMENT: IF KANU PARTY HAS IN FACT TAKEN ON NEW ROLE OF WEEDING OUT PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES WHO ARE THOUGHT TO BE POLITICAL OPPONENTS OF GOK, THIS REPRESENTS ADDITIONAL BLOW TO FREE EXPRESSION IN KENYA'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WHICH SINCE INDEPENDENCE HAS BEEN NOTED AS FORUM OF OUTSPOKEN CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT.

DECONTROL 1/1/77.

MARSHALL

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